

REMARKS

Applicants appreciate the consideration shown by the Office as evidenced by the Office Action mailed on August 2, 2004. In that Office Action, the Examiner allowed claim 28, rejected claims 1-15 and 22-26, and objected to claims 16-21 and 27. In this Response, Applicants have amended claims 1, 4, 20, and 21; and have cancelled claim 19. Applicants respectfully request favorable reconsideration in light of the above amendments and the following remarks.

1. Restriction Requirement

Applicants hereby affirm their election with traverse of Group I, claims 1-28, for prosecution on the merits. Applicants respectfully submit that the search and examination of the entire application can be made without serious burden, because of the closely related nature of the various embodiments of the invention, despite the Examiner's contention that the inventions claimed are distinct. Specifically, as evidenced by the present Office Action, the Examiner has already performed a search that included barium strontium aluminosilicate (BSAS) coatings (e.g., original claim 16), coatings having specified vertical crack densities (e.g., claims 2-4), applied to substrates comprising silicon (e.g., claim 10). Claim 29, from Group II, which the Examiner has withdrawn from consideration, recites an article comprising a substrate comprising silicon and a coating comprising BSAS, where the coating has a specified vertical crack density. Applicants respectfully submit that the examination of this claim and its six dependent claims (each of which recites limitations that correspond to closely analogous limitations in the examined method claims of Group I) can be made without an overly burdensome amount of additional work. Applicants respectfully request that the Examiner reconsider the necessity for a restriction requirement in this case.

2. Informalities—claim 4

Applicants note with appreciation the Examiner's pointing out of the use of inconsistent units in claim 4. Applicants have amended claim 4 to recite "cracks per linear centimeter" to make this claim consistent with parent claims 2 and 3.

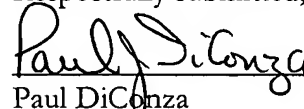
3. Claim Rejections & Amendments

Applicants have amended claim1 to recite the limitation of claim 19: " wherein at least one intermediate layer is disposed onto said substrate prior to applying said thermal-sprayed coating." Claim 19 had been objected to by the Examiner as reciting allowable subject matter, but depending from a rejected base claim. As the Examiner stated in the present Office Action, none of the applied prior art teaches, suggests, or discloses all of the limitations recited in amended claim 1, especially the combination of the limitations of the originally filed claim with the newly added limitation of an intermediate coating, taken from cancelled claim 19. As each of the rejections presented in the Office Action are now moot as a result of the amendment to claim 1, Applicants will not address each rejection separately herein. Applicants respectfully submit that the inclusion of this limitation in amended claim 1 renders this claim, and all of its pending dependent claims 2-27, allowable over all of the prior art applied in the present Office Action. Favorable reconsideration is respectfully requested.

4. Conclusion

In light of the remarks and amendments presented herein, Applicants believe that this serves as a complete response to the subject Office Action. If, however, any issues remain unresolved, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned at the number provided below.

Respectfully submitted,


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Schenectady, New York
Tuesday, November 09, 2004